



Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee

17th May 2017

Title	Report of the 2016-17 Barnet Youth Assembly
Report of	Head of Governance & Voice of the Child Co-ordinator
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix 1 – Report of the 2016-17 Barnet Youth Assembly
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Summary

This report updates the committee on the work that has been done by the 2016-17 Youth Assembly (the second cohort), specifically in respect to issues they have raised and want to bring to the attention of Members.

The Youth Assembly is a public-debating body made up of young people who work, live or study in the borough. Members raise motions that are both relevant to Barnet and important to them, and then have the opportunity to debate on vote on those motions. Successful motions have been included in Appendix 1 – The Report of the 2016-17 Youth Assembly – for Members' consideration, endorsement and comments.

The Assembly, now in its second year, has this year had 57 members signed up. This makes it one of the largest groups of its kind in the country.

This report highlights the need for continued support from members and the committee to support young people as they share their hopes for Barnet and positively engage with the council.

Recommendations

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| <p>1. That the committee notes the report.</p> |
| <p>2. That the committee comments on, and endorses, the successful motions raised by the 2016-17 Youth Assembly, as outlined in Appendix 1.</p> |
| <p>3. That the committee notes and comments on – where applicable – the officers' response to the successful motions.</p> |

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 On 18th November 2015 the committee approved the creation of the Barnet Youth Assembly as set out in a paper entitled *Promoting British Values and Citizenship amongst Children and Young People in Barnet - Hearing the voices of children and young people*.
- 1.2 The Youth Assembly is a group of young people who live, work or study in Barnet and come together to debate local issues that are important to them at Hendon Town Hall. This is the second year that the Youth Assembly has operated in the London Borough of Barnet, and this year 57 members signed up, making it one of the largest groups of its kind in the country.
- 1.3 This year each meeting had particular themes, which were as follows: crime, education, health, politics and Barnet & the community. For each meeting there were prominent guest speakers who attended – a full list can be seen in the report at Appendix 1. Members were asked to raise motions relating to the theme of the meeting.
- 1.4 The debating of motions is led by the members; this includes members chairing debates and leading on the voting process. It should be noted that the process is designed to be driven by the members of the Assembly.
- 1.5 The Youth Assembly operates a system in which members are asked to submit motions on local issues which are important to them. The member is expected to introduce the motion and then the Youth Assembly debates it, querying information provided and discussing the merits of the motion, with the option to amend as they see fit. Once the motion has been debated thoroughly those motions which receive a majority of positive votes are taken forward to the Committee in an annual report to highlight to councillors the issues which the Youth Assembly would like the council to focus on. All motions raised – both successful and unsuccessful – as well as a detailed overview of how motions are raised can be found at Appendix 1.

- 1.6 The Assembly gives young people the opportunity to make their voices heard within the decision making process and helps them develop invaluable skills and confidence in public speaking, debating and critical thinking.
- 1.7 Members are recruited through local schools. This year, over 2,000 leaflets were sent out to all secondary schools in the borough, and 80 posters were put up in local schools to advertise the body and recruit members. This was supported by the launch of the Assembly's website – www.barnet.gov.uk/youthassembly
- 1.8 The Governance Service – in tandem with the Voice of the Child Team in Family Services – runs the Youth Assembly.
- 1.9 In bringing this report to the committee the Assembly can engage meaningfully with the council and give young people an opportunity to participate in a formal council meeting, which furthermore strengthens the commitment to helping young people make an excellent start in life.
- 1.10 The success of the Assembly is contingent on officers carrying forward actions and members taking into consideration the views of the body in future decision making. It is therefore recommended that the committee endorses the motions as outlined in the report at Appendix 1, and comments on those motions where appropriate.
- 1.11 As part of the ongoing improvement of the body, the Governance Service and the Voice of the Child Team will be developing the Assembly's website so that the motions raised by each cohort can be seen online. By May 2018, when the third cohort will bring a report to the committee, it is hoped that it will be possible to track the progress of motions and the successes of the body. This is deemed important to the success of the body; it should be clear where the Assembly has been successful in promoting and championing issues that are important to young people locally.
- 1.12 It should be noted that since one motion being raised by last year's cohort, there has been some quantifiable success. The motion asked the council *to 'take a more proactive role in encouraging the electoral registration of 16-18 year olds in the borough, with a focus on educating young people on how to register'*.

In responding to this motion, the Governance Service first included a link to the voter registration site on the 2,000 leaflets and 80 posters that went round to schools advertising the Youth Assembly (as mentioned at 1.7). The Elections Team have also planned to promote the 'Rock Enroll' programme, an interactive resource pack which encourages young people to register to vote, commissioned by the Cabinet Office.

Since this taking place, the Electoral Commission have emailed the Elections Team to state that the number of local government attainers in Barnet has increased by approximately 296% since last year's register, and the Parliamentary attainers by 188%. This is one of the highest increases in the UK compared to other areas.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Youth Assembly has proved to be a successful template for engaging with young people in Barnet and encouraging them to interact with the council and work for positive change in issues that affect them. The ambition is to ensure young people feel valued and listened to by the council, as well as building their skills and understanding of policy making and the work of the council. The continued support of Members and the committee is crucial to ensuring this is possible and that the Youth Assembly can develop into a nationally recognised model of how to successfully engage young people.
- 2.2 Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires a local authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation within the local authority, with other partners and with other relevant persons in order to improve the well-being of children in its area. Well-being includes:
- Physical and mental health and emotional well-being,
 - Protection from harm and neglect,
 - Education, training and recreation,
 - The contribution made by children and young people to society, and;
 - Social and economic well-being.
- 2.3 Under section 11 of the above Act, local authorities and other statutory partners must ensure that their functions are exercised having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 2.4 The Director of Children's Services (DCS) has a statutory duty to fulfil the following in their post:
- The DCS should have regard to the General Principles of the United Nations. Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and ensure that children and young people are involved in the development and delivery of local services.

The consideration of this report therefore contributes towards the fulfilment of the DCS's obligation towards these duties.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 Not applicable.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The Commissioning Director, Children and Young People, will implement any actions that the committee delegates in relation to the recommendations.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1. The Youth Assembly is enabling young Barnet residents to take responsibility and engage with the council to highlight issues that are important to them. This resonates with the commitment in the Corporate Plan to help residents help themselves. It provides a platform for developing skills such as public speaking and critical thinking, which positively contribute to the future of these young people.

5.1.2. Barnet's Corporate Plan is underpinned by the principles of Fairness, Responsibility and Opportunity. They are at the heart of the council's approach and work with young people needs to be conscious cognisant of those aspirations.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 The implementation of these recommendations will be done through existing teams and contained within existing budgets held in the Children's and Governance services.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 As detailed in Annex A, Responsibility for Functions, in the council's Constitution the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee has the responsibility for all matters relating to the Children's Service.

5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 Any risks associated will be considered during the implementation of these recommendations.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

5.5.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services

5.5.3 In line with this, any work undertaken as part of these recommendations will consider and adhere to all relevant stipulations of the 2010 Equality Act.

- 5.5.4 When considering well-being, it is important to take account of different age groups, race and religious factors and disability. These factors will be considered when undertaking further work, including ensuring that children and young people are able to express their views on proposals.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.6.1 Not applicable.

5.7 Insight

- 5.7.1 None.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee Report, 18th May 2016:
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=697&MId=8262&Ver=4>
- 6.2 Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee Report, 18th November 2015:
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s27431/Promoting%20British%20Values%20and%20Citizenship%20amongst%20Children%20and%20Young%20People%20in%20Barnet.pdf>